



Bay Area Green Business Program

Environmental Values At Work



Annie Jenkins (back left) led the certification effort with support from Ohlone School PTA

Ohlone Elementary School

950 Amarillo Avenue, Palo Alto

650.856.1726

ohlone.pausd.org

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The solar panels on top of the henhouse at the Ohlone School farm are a good indication of the school's efforts to teach its students about sustainable living as well reduce its impact on the environment. Ohlone staff, teachers, parents, and students have made the daily operation of the school a green endeavor, so parent Annie Jenkins wanted the school to get recognized. "I thought the Green Business certification would be a great way for the community to see what efforts folks were taking to run the school in an environmentally responsible manner, plus I figured it might inspire other schools to do the same," says Jenkins.



"Green Seal" certified cleaning products are used by the custodian

In front of each classroom are bins for recycling glass, plastic and paper as well as food scraps. Each day, 5th grade "Green Guides" sort through the bins to ensure the materials are not contaminated with items that are not recyclable and noting which classrooms have done a good job. The food scraps are taken to the farm for composting, which is then used to amend the soil for the school's organic vegetable garden. To further reduce waste, students are responsible for cleaning off their own lunch tables with cloth rags that are taken home by parent volunteers and washed.



Green Guides check through the recycling bins each day to make sure there is no contamination

Some of the green efforts taken on a district-wide level were the installation of low-flow toilets and energy efficient lights, and custodial supply purchases of certified "Green Seal" cleaning products, 100% recycled content toilet paper and paper towels. Other efforts have been initiated by the Ohlone Green Team, a parent-led committee whose goal is to implement a program that will be sustained after they leave. "Some of the things we are currently working on are making sure classrooms have reuseable party supplies, selling affordable family totes with reuseable dinnerwear to bring to school functions, and providing "Green Tips" in the school paper," says Jenkins.

"We are proud of our efforts and we always have more work to. The Ohlone Green Team and the PTA have many great projects planned for next school year," says Jenkins.

For more information on the environmental efforts of Ohlone Elementary School contact Annie Jenkins .